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By Lt. Bernie Kale

**Alaska National Guardsmen participate in All Army shooting match**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Four members of the Alaska National Guard competed in the All Army small arms shooting match held in Fort Benning, GA, last month.

The competition was open to active duty Army Soldiers and Army Reservists, Army and Air National Guardsmen, College ROTC Cadets, and OCS Candidates, according to the Army website.

Alaska Air National Guardsman Master Sgt. Nicolas Blace, along with fellow Alaska Air Guardsman Senior Airman Justin Smith, both with security forces for the 213th Space Warning Squadron, and Alaska Army Guard Soldiers Staff Sgt. James Bruce, 1-297th Calvary Regiment, and Corporal Christopher Maclee, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, competed alongside more than 200 competitors for the top spot in the tournament.

"Our state marksmanship coordinator called me and asked if I can get four guys together to compete in the match," Blace said. "I called the three other Guardsmen that competed in the Alaska TAG Match last year, and were familiar with competitive shooting."

The Alaska Guardsmen competed well overall with Army Guardsman Staff Sgt. Bruce taking home a 3rd place award overall for the novice category.

Sixty-three Air and Army National Guardsmen competed along with active duty and Reservists. The California National Guard took the first-place team award.

Blace said although the competition had potential for bragging rights, the realistic, "stress-style" training was the most valuable takeaway they can pass on to Guardsmen back home.

"Our overall goal is to represent the Alaska Guard the best we can," said Blace. "It helps us in security forces and military police units to have the maximum experience with the weapons we carry every day on duty."

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